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Testimony before the Education Committee February 24, 2016

**In support of: HB-5304 An Act Concerning Authorization of State Grant
Commitments for School Building Projects**

Representative Fleischmann, Senator Slossberg and members of the Education Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding HB-5304 specifically Projects: 212-0026 and 212-0025.

My name is Patricia Cosentino, Superintendent of Schools in Region 12 which encompasses Bridgewater, Roxbury and Washington, CT in Litchfield County. I am here to support HB-5304 – An Act Concerning Authorization of State Grant Commitments for School Building Projects. The agriscience program has great support in the Region 12 communities of Bridgewater, Roxbury and Washington as well as the sending towns of Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, and Sherman.

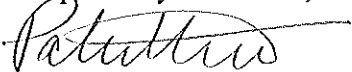
On November 10, 2015, the referendum for both projects passed in all three Region 12 towns by a margin of 69%. This represents a significant percentage of the townspeople approving this initiative. We also received a one million dollar donation to assist the agriscience program by the Diebold Foundation.

The new agriscience program will be addressing a need that has been identified at the state level. Nonnewaug High School, in Region 14, currently turns away 50-60 qualified students each year for its agriscience program. Students with this passion are being denied a program that could be life changing.

The Shepaug Valley Agriscience STEM Academy will provide opportunities for all students to be college and career ready. It will offer areas of study in: plant science and horticulture, natural resources and environment, biotechnology, veterinary and animal sciences, aquaculture and marine sciences, food science, agricultural mechanics and engineering. The program will have an impact for many years to come. It is our great hope that our students will remain in Connecticut, raise families and help to revitalize our state.

I urge you to support the agriscience building project and the science lab renovation project in Region 12. I thank you for your dedication to our students, families and Connecticut communities.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Cosentino Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools